

Commissioner Deborah A. Gist's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, July 20, 2012

Notes from Commissioner Gist:

1. U.S. Department of Education clarifies state, district obligations under [ESEA](#)
2. RIDE names new [Finance Director](#)

From the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE):

3. Orientation sessions scheduled for facilitators of [formative-assessment professional development](#)
4. RIDE provides information on resolving [residency disputes](#)
5. LEAs to designate [EPSS District Configuration Administrators](#) by **August 3 – Action Item**

Other:

6. Rhode Island [Black Heritage Society](#) celebration scheduled

Action Item Calendar

July 27: Deadline for reporting [final evaluation ratings](#)

July 30: Submission, [Absence, ADA, ADM, Suspension, Truancy](#) reports due

August 3: Deadline for naming EPSS District Configuration Administrators (see below)

Notes from Commissioner Gist:

1. U.S. Department of Education clarifies state, district obligations under ESEA

We were pleased with the successful release last week of the 2012 School Classifications, which we based on our new accountability system that the U.S. Department of Education approved in May. The new classification system enables us to diagnose school performance by identifying specific shortcomings and achievements at each school and to provide each identified school with the specific support or intervention needed to improve student achievement and to close achievement gaps. I look forward to working with you, using the information in our accountability system, to accelerate all of our schools toward greatness.

Last week we received a letter from the Assistant Secretary of Education, Deborah S. Delisle, providing further information about implanting our approved request for ESEA flexibility. The

letter clarifies that, despite the approved request for flexibility, several requirements for the state and for all LEAs remain in effect. For example, we are still obligated to comply with various fiscal and reporting requirements of ESEA, with the requirements regarding report cards, and with requirements regarding allocation of SIG funds.

The letter also notes LEAs in Rhode Island are no longer obligated to offer supplementary educational services (SES) or public-school choice. Assistant Secretary Delisle notes that LEAs should “provide parents with information to explain why SES and transportation for public school choice will no longer be offered” beginning in the coming school year. She also notes that students currently taking advantage of public school choice “must be permitted to remain at [their] school of choice” until they complete the highest grade in that school. She encourages LEAs “to consider providing transportation to these schools of choice.”

In the coming weeks, RIDE will work with you to provide information that can help you communicate these matters to families in your community. In the meantime, please contact me if you have any questions about your requirements under ESEA.

Here is a link to the Assistant Secretary’s letter to Rhode Island:

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/implementation-letters/ri-implementation-letter.pdf>

2. RIDE names new Finance Director

This week Mark Dunham joined RIDE as the Director of our Office of Finance. Mark has been the Director of Finance and Administration for the Portsmouth Schools for the past three years. Before he worked in Portsmouth, Mark worked for the Providence Public Schools for 20 years, including a seven-year stint as the Chief Financial Officer. At RIDE, Mark will work within our Division of Fiscal Integrity and Efficiencies, where he will be responsible for planning, developing, and managing the business policies and systems that support all education funding. I’m sure Mark will be in touch with in the coming weeks as we prepare for the opening of the school year and for the next budget cycle.

From RIDE:

3. Orientation sessions scheduled for facilitators of formative-assessment professional development

Please see this message from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

Reminder: If you are launching the formative-assessment professional development this fall and want to send facilitators to an orientation session, please register through eRIDE by August 1. Facilitators only need to attend one half-day session. Here is a list of the sessions:

- Friday, August 10, from 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., at the New England Institute of Technology, 1 New England Tech Blvd., East Greenwich

- Friday, August 10, from 1:30 – 5 p.m., at the New England Institute of Technology, 1 New England Tech Blvd., East Greenwich
- Monday, August 13, from 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., at Lincoln Senior High School, 135 Old River Rd.
- Monday, August 13, from 1:30 - 5 p.m., at Lincoln Senior High School
- Monday, August 20, from 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., at Middletown, Administration Building, 26 Oliphant Lane
- Monday, August 20, from 1:30 – 5 p.m., at Middletown, Administration Building

If you have any questions about the orientation sessions or the formative-assessment professional development, please contact Laura Kacewicz, at laura.kacewicz@ride.ri.gov or 222-8993.

4. RIDE provides information on resolving residency disputes

Please use this link to see a message from Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel David V. Abbott on the process for resolving disputes about residency:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/Legal/DOCUMENTS/RESIDENCY%20Memo%20July%202012.pdf>

5. LEAs to designate EPSS District Configuration Administrators by August 3 – Action Item

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

To prepare for the launch of the Educator Performance and Support System (EPSS), each LEA needs to designate one or two individuals for the role of EPSS District Configuration Administrator. These administrators will serve as the points of contact for key system information and updates, and they will also maintain the administrative rights to create and modify evaluation caseloads for all evaluators within their LEA. These administrators will have access to evaluation information, so it's important to consider the role carefully.

LEAs can send the name(s) of their EPSS District Configuration Administrator to Shoba Annavarjula, at shoba.annavarjula@ride.ri.gov. The deadline submitting names to RIDE is **August 3**.

To access additional information about the role of the EPSS District Configuration Administrator, please visit the RIDE website, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/EPSS.aspx>

Other:

6. Rhode Island Black Heritage Society celebration scheduled

Please see this invitation from the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society, and please feel free to share this invitation within your community:

Join The Rhode Island Black Heritage Society
and Mayor Angel Taveras
To celebrate the unveiling of a historic plaque commemorating
The Meeting Street School
The First Colored Schoolhouse in Rhode Island
Saturday, July 28 at 5 p.m.
5 p.m. Dedication
Meeting Street School
24 Meeting Street, Providence
5:30 p.m. Wine and Cheese Reception
Providence Preservation Society
Shakespeare's Head Garden
21 Meeting Street, Providence
Parking: Available on North Main Street
RSVP: Call Michael, at [421-0606](tel:421-0606) or e-mail: michael@rickmangroup.com

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/fieldmemos/default.aspx>